

Crystal Tips

by Kirsty Logan

when the last smear of ketchup is absorbed by the heel of the loaf,
up he jumps

to do the dishes. he may only be eleven, but his parents raised
him to know about

Chernobyl and Ethiopia and Rwanda, so they are not surprised by
his willingness.

they know he knows about unfortunate children. they retire to the
tv news.

he stacks the plates and rinses out the glasses, being sure to
rattle them around

so his parents can hear. he's a little early and needs to kill time so
he rinses forks.

when he's moves onto knives, she has appeared in next door's
window: sliver

of nut-pale belly, fingers wet with suds, nails painted bright as
glitterballs.

she sways as she scrubs, moving to music he can't hear through
the double walls

between them. the gap between sill and blind is shoebox-sized,
every wiggle

showing an inch more skin. if her midriff is nude then so must
above and below,

he knows. rhinestones are glued along her cuticle, and he prays
for reflections.

he crouches by the sink, hands immersed, to get a better angle. a
breast's curve,

smooth as a pool ball, dips below the blind. he drains the sink,
throws crockery

onto the draining board, and pounds up the stairs. 'he's such a
good boy,'
says his mother to his father. they kiss, soundtracked by
headlines.

